

## National Strategic Training and Education Plan (NSTEP) “Quick sheet”

**NOTE:** For complete NSTEP Plan, see [www.nws.noaa.gov/om/os/org/training/nstep.pdf](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/os/org/training/nstep.pdf)

### Introduction

The purpose of the National Strategic Training and Education Plan (NSTEP) is to provide a clear mechanism by which National Weather Service (NWS) training and education requirements are identified, prioritized, and satisfied. The NSTEP process is outlined below.

### Goals of the NSTEP Process

- *Establish a logical, flexible, and responsive training infrastructure to quickly translate field training and education requirements into easily accessible, usable, and effective training materials.* An NSTEP Team (see Infrastructure section below) defines and establishes priorities for training via a well-defined process.
- *Implement an efficient, open, and consistent process for defining and establishing priorities for NWS training requirements.* All requirements are defined by field representatives and Office of Climate, Water and Weather Services (OCWWS) Service Program representatives to the NSTEP Team. Requirements are prioritized solely by field representatives to the team.
- *Create an integrated model for defining required knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform job tasks.* These definitions will be easily accessible and understood by users and are used by the trainers as the template for development. This is done through the Professional Development Series (PDS) concept.
- *Develop annual implementation plans (IP) for training and science support to ensure responsiveness to field requirements and to sustain the high level of science and technical infusion required to maintain the high forecast standards of the NWS.* Each year, annual IPs which detail training requirements are drafted and approved by National and Regional Headquarters Directors and the Director of the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP), and signed by the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Weather Services.
- *Create a process to facilitate rapid response to new or changing training priorities within any fiscal year. Identify requirements which cannot be met due to resource limitations or additions to training priorities, and raise them to senior management.* The field representatives to the NSTEP Team communicate regularly to discuss any revisions to requirements which arise during the year.

- *Establish an effective evaluation process to ensure staff are reaping the intended benefits of training. Involve local supervisors in assessing the impact of training on job performance and providing feedback to the Team.* PDS Instructional Component (IC) are responsible for producing an end-of-training evaluation to assess the impact of the training provided.

## **Infrastructure**

The NSTEP Team is composed of three groups:

The **Field Requirements Group (FRG)** consists of one representative from each Region and NCEP. This group is responsible for identifying and prioritizing training requirements and deficiencies, and for providing recommendations for annual training implementation plans. Essentially, this group decides upon those training items which should be developed and delivered in a given fiscal year, and then recommends how to spend the discretionary portion of the training budget.

The **National Headquarters Group (NHG)** consists of representatives from the Office of Climate, Water and Weather Services (OCWWS) Training Division, the Office of Hydrologic Development (OHD), the Office of Operational Systems (OOS), the Office of Science and Technology (OS&T), and OCWWS Service Programs (as needed). This group provides support, direction and coordination for the NWS training requirements process.

The **Heads of Training Centers Group (HOTG)** is composed of all training providers, including the NWS Training Center, the Warning Decision Training Branch (WDTB) in Norman, OK, and the Cooperative Program for Operational Meteorology, Education, and Training (COMET) Branch in Boulder, CO. OHD also provides training on Hydrology specific issues, and the Virtual Institute for Satellite Integration Training (VISIT) provides teletraining on integrated remote sensing. These training facilities are responsible for developing and delivering training on specific topics as tasked by the FRG.

## **The Annual NSTEP Process**

The annual NSTEP process and timeline ([graphic](#)) used to determine the training to be developed and delivered in a given fiscal year is:

- Step 1: The FRG/NHG polls field offices to assess and identify training deficiencies using the Professional Development Series (PDS)/Professional Competency Unit (PCU) structure. (Ongoing)
- Step 2: Additional science and technology timelines and service improvement metrics are suggested by NWS Headquarters service/science and technology programs. (Nov. 30)
- Step 3: The FRG jointly discusses training deficiencies within the constraints of annual budget, and sends resulting list of potential residence courses and non-residence instructional components (ICs) for the next fiscal year to HOTG. (Dec. 15)
- Step 4: FRG and HOTG discuss training options and resources for each residence course and IC. (Dec. 15 - Mar. 15)
- Step 5: The FRG jointly discusses and recommends the proposed allocation of training resources for the next fiscal via the Implementation Plan (IP). (Mar. 15 - Apr. 30)
- Step 6: The IP is approved by the Office and Regional Directors (May 15) and signed by the Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA) (By Aug. 1). IP posted on NWS Training Center web page. (by Aug. 15)
- Step 7: HOTG designs, develops and delivers training in accordance with the annual IP. (Ongoing)
- Step 8: Training assessment and evaluation occurs. Return to Step 1.

# Figure 1: The NSTEP Process (timeline denoted outside boxes)

